



## Deer and Turkey Special Hunt Area Rules

### Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

### 2012-2013 Deer Hunting

Midewin Hunting Passes Available  
Beginning Tuesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

Welcome to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The U.S. Forest Service is pleased to offer 9,117 acres of the Prairie to general public access in 2012. Any lands open to the public are open to deer hunting, unless otherwise posted.

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and is a federal facility. State hunting laws as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations 2012-2013 are enforced at Midewin with the following additions.

Special Hunt Area rules have been developed for all hunting at Midewin consistent with U.S. Forest Service policies and guidelines for recreation and public access. Other supplemental and short-term policies have also been developed because the Army continues to clean up contamination within Midewin's boundaries and because the Prairie is undergoing restoration to native habitats. All of these conditions combine to provide a unique recreational experience at Midewin for all visitors.

## GENERAL RULES & PROCEDURES

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	<p>Questions regarding the Midewin hunting program should be directed to:</p> <p>U.S. Forest Service <a href="http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin">www.fs.usda.gov/midewin</a> Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie 30239 S. State Route 53 Wilmington, IL 60481 (815) 423-6370</p> <p><a href="mailto:rshort@fs.fed.us">rshort@fs.fed.us</a></p>
<b>HUNTING SEASONS</b>	<p>Midewin is open for the following deer hunting seasons:</p> <p><u>Archery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• October 1 through November 15, 2012</li><li>• November 16 through Nov. 28, 2012 and</li><li>• December 3, 2012 through January 20, 2013</li></ul> <p><u>Firearm</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• November 16-18, 2012 and</li><li>• November 29 through Dec. 2, 2012</li></ul> <p><u>Muzzleloader-Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• December 7-9, 2012</li></ul> <p>Hunting with handguns is not permitted at Midewin.</p> <p>There are no antler restrictions at Midewin.</p> <p>Taking any game or nongame species other than deer at Midewin is prohibited.</p>

<b>AREAS OPEN TO HUNTING</b>	<p>All areas open to the general public are also open to deer hunting.</p> <p>It is very important to consult the provided maps for detailed information on the boundaries of the open areas. Lands outside these boundaries are not open to public access and trespassers may be cited and fined. Some lands outside these boundaries are still being cleaned up by the Army and may present hazards to trespassers.</p> <p><u>If a wounded deer crosses into a closed area of Midewin, the hunter must contact the Forest Service at (815) 263-4060 to obtain permission to track it.</u></p> <p>In addition to Forest Service boundary maps, USGS topographic maps for lands within the Midewin boundaries are available for sale at the Midewin Welcome Center.</p>
<b>PERMITS &amp; PASSES</b>	<p>All hunting permits and licenses are issued by Illinois DNR. Firearm permits for Midewin are issued through the Illinois DNR lottery system for Special Hunt Areas.</p> <p>In addition, all hunters must obtain a hunting pass from the Midewin Welcome Center. There is no charge for this pass. <u>Hunters must show their state-issued hunting license in order to get a Midewin hunting pass.</u></p> <p>The pocket portion of the pass must be carried at all times while hunting at Midewin. The larger portion of the pass must be placed so it is clearly visible through the front windshield. At the end of the season, this pass must be completed and returned to Midewin.</p>

	<p>Any violation of the rules and regulations may result in the forfeiture of hunting privileges at Midewin for the remainder of the season and issuance of a citation.</p>
<p><b>TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT CLOSURES</b></p>	<p>Management activities, volunteer workdays, and public programs will occur periodically throughout the deer hunting season. The Forest Service may temporarily or permanently close areas to hunting. Refer to the bulletin boards in the parking lots or call the Midewin Welcome Center for the most up-to-date information.</p> <p>Midewin makes every effort to inform hunters of closures and activities ahead of time. Sometimes this is not possible but the management activity will go on.</p>
<p><b>PUBLIC ACCESS &amp; TRAILS</b></p>	<p>All hunting areas are open to the general public. The following guidelines must be observed and will be enforced to ensure a safe and enjoyable recreational experience for all visitors.</p> <p>Access to public lands at Midewin is by non-motorized means only – hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snow shoeing, or cross country skiing. Bicycles and horses are restricted to designated multiple use trails and must stay on trail. Trails are not snow plowed in the winter. Hunters are welcome to use game carts.</p> <p>There are approximately 34 miles of designated trails available for recreational access, including 22 miles for shared use by hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians and 12 miles for hikers only. Trail maps are available online and at the Midewin Office.</p> <p>Equestrians and bicyclists are required to stay on these designated trails at all times of the year. Non-hunters are restricted to trails</p>

	<p>only during firearm hunting seasons. Hunters should be aware that non-hunters will be using the trails during their hunt and locate accordingly. All visitors during hunting season are advised to wear blaze orange for safety.</p> <p>The Forest Service prohibits shooting in or within 150 yards of any building, developed recreation site, or occupied area. At Midewin, this particularly means <u>no shooting when hikers, bicyclists, or equestrians are within 150 yards</u>. Shooting across roads, bodies of water, and cemeteries is also prohibited by state law and/or FS Order.</p> <p>Hunters using bicycles or horses to get part way to their hunting sites must obey state laws and Forest Service Orders regarding transportation of firearms. <u>Firearms must be unloaded and completely cased while riding horses or bicycles at Midewin.</u></p> <p>There is no camping at Midewin, including the parking lots. Hunters must sign in at parking lots which may be accessed at 4 am.</p>
<b>HUNTING STANDS</b>	<p>Construction or use of permanent deer stands is not permitted at Midewin. Only portable stands that do no permanent damage to trees are permitted. Do not cut tree limbs. Hunting stands may <u>not</u> be left in place overnight at Midewin; hunting stands in violation of these rules may be confiscated.</p>
<b>ACCESSIBLE HUNTING BLINDS</b>	<p>Accessible hunting blinds may be reserved for hunters with an Illinois P1A or P2A Disability card. Reservations must be made at the Midewin Welcome Center. Hunters must also sign in and out of the accessible blind at the parking lot trailhead on the day</p>

	<p>of their hunt.</p> <p>Only hunters with a reservation may use an accessible blind. No other hunters may hunt within 50 yards of an accessible blind when it is occupied. The only exception is the companion assisting the hunter reserving the accessible blind. This companion is also not counted in the number of hunters limited to any zone on the east side.</p> <p>Restrictions on motorized access at Midewin apply to hunters with disabilities, with the exception of a motorized device designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, <u>and</u> that is suitable for use in an <u>indoor</u> pedestrian area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person” means that the original design and manufacture of the wheelchair was only for the purpose of mobility for a person who has a disability. This does not include after-market retrofit of a motorized unit to make it useable by a person who has a disability.</li> <li>• “Suitable for indoor pedestrian use” means useable inside a home, mall, courthouse, etc. (Forest Service Manual 2353.05 and ADA Title V Section 507c)</li> </ul>
<b>SUNRISE/SUNSET</b>	<p>Exact sunrise and sunset times are listed in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations. Remember, <u>hunters must add one hour to sunrise and sunset times in the IDNR table through October 31 to account for Daylight Savings Time.</u></p>

<b>SUCCESSFUL HUNT</b>	<p>Hunters are must note their successful hunt when they sign out of hunting at Midewin and are encouraged to share information and photos at the Welcome Center.</p> <p>Hunters are required to return their hunting passes by February 15, 2013. This will help us keep more accurate records on the deer harvest at Midewin and adjust the hunting program accordingly.</p>
<b>RESTORATION</b>	<p>The Forest Service, together with the Illinois DNR and the support of hundreds of volunteers and partner agencies, businesses, and organizations, is working to restore the prairie to the Prairie State.</p> <p>You can watch this process in action over the years during your visits to Midewin. It may look more like a construction site in some areas, but the activities you will see are actually important steps in rebuilding the natural habitats, biodiversity, and landscape. A variety of activities are part of the restoration process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• demolition of abandoned buildings,</li><li>• cutting of non-native or invasive trees and brush,</li><li>• application of herbicide to non-native or invasive plants,</li><li>• earthmoving equipment restoring the shape of the land,</li><li>• cattle grazing to maintain grassland bird habitat,</li><li>• farm equipment planting, mowing, spraying herbicide, and harvesting to restore desired or keep out unwanted plant species, and</li><li>• Army cleanup of contamination.</li></ul>

	<p>Visitors may observe equipment, supplies, flagging, or structures placed to support these restoration activities or research. Please respect private property and ongoing work by not disturbing these materials.</p> <p>Some hunters are concerned that vegetation changes will reduce the deer habitat and population. While short-term disturbance may drive deer to less busy areas, the long-term restoration is not expected to significantly affect the size of the deer herd at Midewin.</p>
<b>OTHER RULES</b>	<p>No motorized vehicles may be used for recreation at Midewin. Visitors may, however, see administrative and contractor vehicles being used for ongoing work.</p> <p>Some activities are not allowed at Midewin, including camping, building fires, fishing, swimming, collecting plants, and pursuits that may disturb the soil, such as metal detection. If you have a question about whether an activity is permitted at Midewin, please ask at the Welcome Center.</p> <p><u>Heritage Resources:</u> Disturbing or removing any prehistoric, historic, or archaeological resource, site, artifact, property, or structure is prohibited.</p> <p><u>Dogs:</u> Dogs are currently welcome at Midewin as long as they are on a leash no longer than 6 feet and stay on trail.</p> <p><u>Livestock &amp; Gates:</u> Cattle are helping maintain grassland bird habitat by keeping grass at the height preferred by different bird species for nesting and feeding. Please <u>keep pasture gates closed</u> and do not</p>



	<p>disturb the cows.</p> <p><u>Traffic:</u> Operators of heavy equipment on the roads and in the fields may not be able to see or hear visitors. Stay well away from this equipment. Some areas may be posted closed during project work.</p> <p><u>Open Hours:</u> Midewin is a Day Use facility and may only be accessed during the hours of 4 am until 10 pm. Hunters are not allowed to enter the parking lots until 4 am and must leave no later than 10 pm.</p>
<b>IN CASE OF EMERGENCY</b>	<p><b>Call 911 for medical emergencies.</b> Otherwise, contact the U.S. Forest Service at (815) 423-6370 <u>OR</u></p> <p><u>After Hours for urgent situations only (815) 263-4060</u></p>

**WEST SIDE RULES & PROCEDURES**

<b>DEER HUNTING AREAS</b>	There are 4,770 acres open to the public on the west side of Midewin.
<b>PARKING</b>	<p>There are 3 parking lots available for public use on the west side:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explosives Road Trailhead (P5) at old Gate 10 west of State Route 53; and</li><li>• P1 and P3 north of River Road between I-55 and State Route 53.</li><li>• P3: An 8-foot-tall game fence surrounds the River Road native seed production garden, including the parking lot at P3. This fence was installed to reduce damage to prairie plants and seeds by browsing deer. Walk-through gates are available at the west and east ends of the enclosure and to either side of the north gate on Boathouse Road. Please keep these gates closed.</li></ul>
<b>POSTED HUNTING SITES</b>	<p>The west side of Midewin has two types of hunting areas, hunting sites and hunting zones. Hunters must sign in and out of designated hunting sites. Hunting sites are managed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hunters must hunt within 50 yards of the posted site number.</li><li>• Moving from one hunting site to another requires signing out and back into the new location.</li><li>• ODD-numbered hunting sites may be used <u>only</u> on ODD-numbered calendar days.</li><li>• EVEN-numbered sites may be used <u>only</u> on EVEN-numbered calendar days.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPS coordinates for posted hunting sites are available at the Midewin Welcome Center or online at the Midewin website at <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp/">www.fs.fed.us/mntp/</a>.</li> <li>• Within hunting zones, hunters may hunt anywhere within designated zone.</li> <li>• Changing zones requires returning to the sign in/out list to sign out and back into the new zone.</li> <li>• Each zone has an optimum recommended number of hunters that may be signed in at any one time.</li> </ul>												
<b>WEST SIDE HUNTING ZONES</b>	<p>Hunters must sign in and out of designated hunting zones. Each zone has a maximum recommended numbers. Exceeding this number of hunters reduces the quality of the hunting experience for all.</p> <p>Recommended number of hunters per zone:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>P1 Parking Area</i></td></tr> <tr> <td>Zone P1 North</td><td>5 Hunters</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>P3 Parking Area</i></td></tr> <tr> <td>Zone 811 South</td><td>5 Hunters</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>P5 Explosives Road TH</i></td></tr> <tr> <td>Zone 811 North</td><td>8 Hunters</td></tr> </table>	<i>P1 Parking Area</i>		Zone P1 North	5 Hunters	<i>P3 Parking Area</i>		Zone 811 South	5 Hunters	<i>P5 Explosives Road TH</i>		Zone 811 North	8 Hunters
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<b>WEST SIDE TRAILS</b>	<p><b>Henslow Trail:</b> 5.5 miles from Iron Bridge to River Road Trailhead. Foot, bicycle, horse.</p> <p><b>Prairie Creek Woods Trail:</b> 1.5-mile <u>hiking-only</u> loop north of P3.</p> <p><b>Blodgett Marsh Trail:</b> 4.5 mile <u>hiking-only</u> loop from P3 to Blodgett Marsh (Zone 1N).</p> <p><b>Newton Interim Trail:</b> 1.5-mile <u>hiking-only</u> loop south of Explosives Road Trailhead.</p> <p><b>Henslow Interim Trail:</b> 1.5-mile <u>hiking-only</u> loop north of Explosives Road Trailhead</p>												

## EAST SIDE RULES & PROCEDURES

<b>DEER HUNTING AREAS</b>	<p>The public is not allowed into closed areas on Midewin's east side. The Army is cleaning up contamination in these areas and this prohibition is to protect public safety. Hunters may seek permission to trail an injured deer by calling the Midewin office during normal business hours or the afterhours phone number listed on the hunting pass. Trespassers may be cited and fined.</p> <p>A game fence has been constructed around the Chicago Road native seed production gardens, located at the northwest corner of Zone 6, to protect prairie plants and seeds from deer. Please keep the gates closed.</p>
<b>PARKING</b>	<p>There are two parking lots available for public use on the east side of Midewin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Hoff Road Trailhead is located on Hoff Road two mileseast of State Route 53. Hunting zones 3 through 7 may be accessed from this parking lot.</li><li>• The Iron Bridge Trailhead is located on the east side of State Route 53, about 2.5 miles north of the Welcome Center and just north of the iron railroad overpass. Zones 1 and 2 may be accessed from this parking lot.</li><li>• In addition, entry into Midewin is available from the Wauponsee Trail at Road 1 North or Offner Road on Midewin's eastern boundary; however, there is no parking available at this access point and the Forest Preserve District of Will County currently prohibits</li></ul>

	carrying weapons on the Wauponsee Trail (General Use Regulation Ordinance No. 124, Ch. V, Sec. 5).																								
<b>HUNTING ZONES</b>	<p>Hunters on the east side of Midewin must sign in and out of designated hunting zones.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Iron Bridge Sign In &amp; Out</th><th>Hoff Road Sign In &amp; Out</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Zone 1</td><td>Zone 3</td></tr> <tr> <td>Zone 2</td><td>Zone 4</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Zone 5</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Zone 6</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Zone 7</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunters may enter the parking lot at 4 am. Hunters may sign in for their hunting zone upon entering the parking lot. All hunters must sign out no later than 10 pm.</li> <li>• Hunters may hunt anywhere within their designated zone.</li> <li>• Changing zones requires returning to the sign in/out list to sign out and back into the new zone.</li> <li>• Each zone has an optimum recommended number of hunters that may be signed in at any one time.</li> </ul> <p>Exceeding this number of hunters reduces the quality of the hunting experience for all.</p> <p>Recommended number of hunters per zone:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Iron Bridge Trailhead</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Zone 1</td><td>12 Hunters</td></tr> <tr> <td>Zone 2</td><td>10 Hunters</td></tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">Hoff Road Trailhead</th></tr> <tr> <td>Zone 3</td><td>10 Hunters</td></tr> <tr> <td>Zone 4</td><td>12 Hunters</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Iron Bridge Sign In & Out	Hoff Road Sign In & Out	Zone 1	Zone 3	Zone 2	Zone 4		Zone 5		Zone 6		Zone 7	Iron Bridge Trailhead		Zone 1	12 Hunters	Zone 2	10 Hunters	Hoff Road Trailhead		Zone 3	10 Hunters	Zone 4	12 Hunters
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<b>EAST SIDE TRAILS</b>	<p><b>Twin Oaks Trail:</b> 5.8-mile loop from Hoff Road Trailhead. Foot, bicycle, horse. (Note that a washed out culvert (May 2012) has disabled this loop. Please refer to hunt map.)</p> <p><b>Bailey Bridge Trail:</b> 2.5-mile connector between Twin Oaks Trail and Wauponsee Trail. Foot, bicycle, horse.</p> <p><b>Bunker Field Trail:</b> 4-mile loop in Zone 5. Foot, bicycle, horse.</p> <p><b>Group 63 Trail:</b> 3.5-mile loop from Iron Bridge Trailhead. Foot, bicycle, horse.</p> <p><b>Hedgeapple Trail North:</b> 1.5-mile extension from the Twin Oaks Trail to Group 63. <u>Hiking only.</u></p> <p><b>Turtle Pond Trail:</b> 0.3-mile loop around Turtle Pond and through the Chicago Road Seedbeds. <u>Hiking only.</u></p>	

## Closures

<b>CLOSURES</b>	<b>Site 219:</b> Closed from October 1, 2012 until December 3, 2012
<b>PROJECT CLOSURES</b>	<b>Temporary closures</b> may occur for project work throughout the season. We will post closure areas on bulletin boards as soon as possible.

## **NOTES**

We expect interest in hunting at Midewin to continue to grow. Successful management of this program will depend on all recreationists – hunters, hikers, bicyclists, birdwatchers, and equestrians – understanding the laws, orders, regulations and rules and being considerate of each other. Please protect the quality of your and others' recreation experience by packing out trash to parking lot receptacles and dragging gut piles away from visitor areas.

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